

The trusted cloud provider: leveraging technology and expertise for healthcare SaaS providers



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Douglas Rempfer
COO
Surgical Information Systems

Healthcare organizations have adopted the cloud en masse. Indeed, 65 percent of healthcare organizations already utilize the cloud or cloud services within their organization, according to the *HIMSS Analytics 2017 Essential Brief: Cloud*.¹

Leaders at Surgical Information Systems (SIS), a leading perioperative IT vendor based in Alpharetta, Ga., recognized the importance of offering ambulatory surgery IT system via the cloud. “The fastest growing portion of our business is in the ambulatory surgery center market. We felt the right solution for that space needed to be cloud-based. That market is beginning to see cloud-based solutions from competitors,” said Douglas Rempfer, COO, SIS. “Ambulatory Surgery Centers (ASCs) are usually standalone facilities with two or three operating rooms. They don’t have the large IT infrastructure or staff that hospitals do and, therefore, have more challenges supporting client-server based solutions.”

SIS made the decision to leverage its years of experience to develop a new, cloud-based ASC solution and leverage a cloud-based infrastructure that would enable ASCs to easily access the software and remove much of their IT burden. “We started from scratch, using our ASC experience, and built a new ASC solution from the ground up. Because much of our experience was with on-premise client server architecture, when we started we were at ground-zero of a steep learning curve,” he said.

To move forward quickly, SIS developed a request for proposal and started talking to colocation companies. Through its conversations with various vendors, though, SIS realized that it needed more than just floor space, racks and hardware equipment.

“Starting out, we didn’t really have the team in-house to provide 24-7, around-the-clock support of a cloud-based infrastructure, nor the expertise to know what to look for, manage and monitor,” Rempfer said. “We needed a partner that could not only provide us with the technology infrastructure but also provide a certain level of staffing and management.”

In addition, SIS needed a vendor that understood the unique needs of healthcare and could ensure compliance with HIPAA regulations. After reviewing several proposals, SIS contracted with Edge Hosting primarily because of the vendor’s proclivity to create strong ties with its customers. “Edge was clearly leaps and bounds ahead of everybody else as far as partnering with us,” he said.

Indeed, Edge places a high premium on working hand-in-hand with its customers from the start. “Edge is part of the conversation in building new technologies [from the beginning],” said Vlad Friedman, CEO, Edge. For example, SIS provided input on applications, scale, technology stacks, as well as desired outcomes. Edge then worked closely with them to recommend the best approach and align the infrastructure with their needs.

This willingness to work closely with SIS has been invaluable. “From day one, Edge has had engineers on the phone who were truly interested in investing the time to learn what our software does and what our vision is. They partnered with us to figure out what our initial investment needed to be,” Rempfer said.

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Perhaps most important, the partnership helped SIS develop its cloud-based software in a secure fashion that complies with HIPAA regulations. “Edge provided us with the expertise to quickly learn how our code needed to be written in a secure way and how our database and infrastructure needed to be configured to make sure it was the most secure environment,” he explained.

The partnership has resulted in a variety of other benefits as well. For example, SIS has been able to:

- **Reduce the time-to-market**

“They have taken a ton of things out of our go-to-market critical path,” Rempfer said. For example, SIS did not have to invest time in hiring and training staff to support the cloud.

In addition, because Edge has extensive cloud experience, it is possible to “move applications to the cloud and have evolved patterns, tools and technologies to actually make these moves much more efficient,” according to Friedman.

- **Better manage costs**

Working with Edge has enabled SIS to move from a capital expenditure model to an operational expenditure model. “We don’t have to worry about making huge capital investments every one, two or three years,” Rempfer said. “We have a predictable, scalable cost model now that we can build our business on with confidence.”

- **Provide improved service to customers**

“We get the benefit of the Edge learning curve,” Rempfer noted. “They are managing cloud applications for hundreds of clients and we get that knowledge, which improves our ability to provide the best service to our clients.”

- **Meet evolving needs on the cloud journey**

“We can spin our capacity up or spin down incrementally according to what our development or testing needs are. So, if all of a sudden we experience a glitch where we want to do testing, we can spin up two additional web servers for 30 days, or even for a week pretty quickly without having to purchase it,” Rempfer said.

In the final analysis, working with a trusted partner makes it possible for healthcare organizations to quickly experience the benefits associated with cloud computing without the struggle that is sometimes associated with the transition to this platform.

Reference

1. HIMSS Analytics 2017 Essential Brief: Cloud. http://www.himssanalytics.org/sites/himssanalytics/files/Cloud%20Study_2017%20Snapshot.pdf



About EdgeHosting:

Edge designs, operates, and simplifies secure and compliant IaaS and PaaS Managed Cloud Hosting that delivers comprehensive operational coverage of controls for FedRAMP, HIPAA, PCI, SSAE 16 SOC 2 Type 2 and EU Privacy Shield Framework. Edge’s services include Compliance Architecture & Audit Support, Cloud Migration & Design, AWS Managed Services, and Secure Federal/Healthcare Hybrid Clouds.

Our mission is to be the easiest partner to host business critical, secure, and compliant web sites and applications. With a relentless focus on our customers, Edge improves business outcomes by leveraging more than twenty years of experience in highly regulated industries including government, financial services, and healthcare. www.edgehosting.com